



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

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**DEQ
Planning Division**

490 N. Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 752-5501
FAX (406) 257-0349
11/16/2010
REF:MD041-10.doc

Robert Ray
MT Dept. of Environmental Quality
Water Quality Planning Bureau
1520 E. Sixth Ave.
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ray,

The Flathead Conservation District recently contacted me regarding a 319 grant application on Haskill Creek. During the application review process, concerns arose about improving habitat for non-native brook trout, impacts to native fish conservation, public access on private lands, and public benefits. This letter may help clarify these issues.

The proposed project on Haskill creek will improve habitat for brook trout. There is a population of native westslope cutthroat trout in the Haskill Drainage upstream of the site. Cutthroat may come down into the project area, but their numbers will remain low. Brook trout are well established in Haskill Creek, in surrounding drainages and across the Flathead Basin. The proposed project will not significantly improve conditions for brook trout or allow them to expand and further impact native fish populations. This habitat project does not threaten native fish populations or conservation.

The proposed project is on private land with limited public access, similar to most private lands in the area. Small streams, such as Haskill Creek, provide good fishing with high catch rates for small-sized trout. These fisheries can be very popular with families and provide harvest opportunities for those wanting to eat fish. In the Flathead Drainage, we have very restrictive fishing regulations that largely prohibit harvest of native trout and very liberal regulations that allow high harvest rates on non-native fish. Non-native trout provide diversity and opportunity for the angling public. The proposed project will increase public fishing opportunity if the landowner allows public access and the improved habitat increases fish abundance.

The primary public benefit of the proposed project is improved water quality. High water quality in the Flathead Lake is consistently a priority for citizens of Flathead County and Montana and regularly arises in community decisions. Although relative to the entire basin this project is small, cumulatively these projects will help protect and conserve high water quality in the Flathead River System. Please contact me if there are any questions or information needs.

Sincerely,

Mark Deleray
Fisheries Biologist



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September 20, 2010

Robert Ray/Water Activities Work Group
c/o MT Dept. of Environmental Quality
Water Quality Planning Bureau
1520 E. Sixth Ave.
PO Box 20091
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Robert and WAWG,

We are writing to show our support of the proposed streambank restoration work on our family property along Haskill Creek. The plan developed by River Design Group along 1222' of Haskill Creek will stabilize our stream bank, reduce erosion and help keep the creek clean. Planting native vegetation on the newly created bench areas will also lower water temperature and create better fish habitat. The new benches will help control flooding on the downstream parts of the creek. These downstream areas have been experiencing increased erosion in the last few years, so flood control is a real plus.

Whitefish High School students will be involved with the project. This is a great way to not only make an improvement on our piece of the creek, but also help to educate and involve our local youth. Please support this work on Haskill Creek.

Sincerely,

Kent Reimer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kent Reimer", written over a horizontal line.

Kurt Reimer

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurt Reimer", written over a horizontal line.



September 23, 2010
Letter #2010-067

Robert Ray
Water Activities Work Group
Water Quality Planning Bureau/DEQ
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ray:

I am writing on behalf of the City of Whitefish to support a grant application from the Haskill Basin Watershed Council to fund the restoration of 1,222 feet of Haskill Creek on the Reimers property. This site is the last priority site for restoration which was identified in the 2003 Watershed Assessment.

The project is targeted to reduce non-point source pollution from sediment; on a similar past project, they reduced such sediment by 86%. The project will reduce erosion, improve water quality, restore the floodplain functioning, and increase habitat. With the continuing TMDL process, we all need to pursue a number of improvements to reduce water quality impairments from non-point sources.

This project is a collaborative effort with the Whitefish High School and other supporters. I am writing with the City of Whitefish's support and we thank you for considering our support.

Sincerely,

Chuck Stearns
City Manager
cstearns@cityofwhitefish.org

cc: John Wilson, Public Works Director
Greg Acton, Utility Operations Supervisor
Patti Mason, Haskill Basin Watershed Council



Natural Resources Conservation Service
Kalispell Field Office
133 Interstate Lane
Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 752-4242
(406) 752-4879 fax

September 24, 2010

Robert Ray/Water Activities Work Group
MT Dept. of Environmental Quality
Water Quality Planning Bureau
1520 E. Sixth Ave.
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ray:

I am in total support of the Haskill Basin Watershed Council and their efforts to reduce bank erosion, improve water quality by addressing nonpoint source pollution, restore floodplain function, and improve fisheries and wildlife habitat in the Haskill Creek watershed area in the vicinity of Whitefish, MT.

The funding from DEQ will enable this "grass roots" organization assists with the next restoration phase along Haskill Creek in a partnership collaboration among public and private organizations, a private landowner, and the Whitefish High School students. This project will be an extension of the successful work performed in the past on another private landowner's property.

Thank you for considering and approving their request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Angel R. Rosario".

Angel R. Rosario
District Conservationist
Kalispell, Field Office
406-752-4242 X104

September 30, 2010

Robert Ray/Water Activities Work Group
MT Dept. of Environmental Quality
Water Quality Planning Bureau
1520 E. Sixth Ave.
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

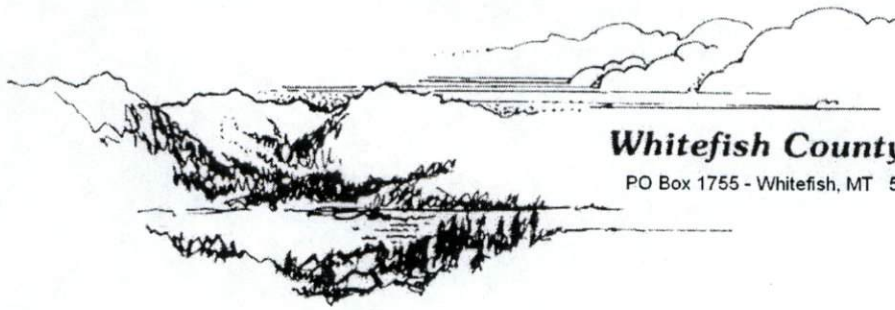
Dear Mr. Ray,

The Flathead Conservation District, on behalf of the Haskill Basin Watershed Council, is in the process of submitting a grant application to DEQ to fund the construction phase of restoration on 1222' of Haskill Creek on Reimers property. This site is the last one identified in the 2003 Watershed Assessment as being a priority for restoration. It proposes to use techniques similar to what was used upstream on Voermans' property, which reduced nonpoint source pollution from sediment by at least 86% along the restored reach. The work will reduce erosion, improve water quality, restore floodplain function and increase riparian and aquatic habitat. The project will also involve the students of Whitefish High School, and has been a great collaborative effort.

I have been on the Haskill Basin Watershed Council since its creation, and I have followed closely the studies and actual on the ground work it has accomplished in concert with the Flathead Conservation District. I live next door to the Reimer family, where the restoration work is proposed, and I know firsthand how needed the work is. I also know the Reimers, and know that they will do everything necessary, in terms of follow up and maintenance, to make sure the project is successful. I strongly support this project, and urge you to favorably consider it for grant funding.

Sincerely,

John M. Phelps



Whitefish County Water & Sewer District

PO Box 1755 - Whitefish, MT 59937 - (406) 863-4820 - Fax: (406) 863-4809

September 30, 2010

Robert Ray, Water Activities Work Group
MT Department of Environmental Quality
Water Quality Planning Bureau
1520 E Sixth Avenue
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Re: Flathead Conservation District / Haskill Basin Watershed Council Application

Dear Mr. Ray,

The Whitefish County Water and Sewer District strongly encourages you to grant the application submitted on behalf of the Haskill Basin Watershed Council. The Whitefish County Water and Sewer District oversees and monitors nonmunicipal water quality of the Haskill Basin and Whitefish Lake drainages.

The District understands the restoration being proposed is for the last of six sites, approximately 1200 lineal feet, identified in the 2003 Watershed Assessment as a priority for restoration. In keeping with previous restoration done in the area, proposed techniques would include use of aggressive willow transplanting to encourage native plant establishment, lowering/sloping of high banks to elevations that will promote flooding and reduce in-stream energy and erosive forces, creation of functioning riparian and floodplain areas that will support native plant communities, filter sediment, and provide stability to the channel.

An upstream project using these same techniques was very successful at improving water quality in Haskill Creek and its downstream watershed, and it would be a best practice to continue this effort along the same streambed, thus maintaining the watershed's water quality. Also of importance is the opportunity to utilize the Whitefish High School Free Flow Program students in this very vital aspect of water quality education. Your support in this regard would be most appreciated.

Cordially,

Rita K. Hanson
General Manager